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DEPARTMENT FOR KOSOVO MONITORING GROUP, NEA/ELA, EUR/SCE
(BLACK, SHIRATORI)

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SUBJECT: EGYPT "WAITING AND SEEING" ON RECOGNIZING KOSOVO

REF: A. SECSTATE 16319

1B. CAIRO 246
1C. CAIRO 77

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11. (SBU) The Ambassador called Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit on February 17 to reiterate our position that Egypt should quickly recognize Kosovo, as Special Envoy for the Kosovo Final Status Talks Ambassador Frank Wisner had conveyed to Aboul Gheit in their February 7 meeting (ref B). Aboul Gheit replied that, although Egypt may eventually recognize Kosovo, it "will not act in haste" to do so. Aboul Gheit said he was "uneasy with the secession" and the international recognition of it, worrying that it might inspire other secession movements.

12. (SBU) Per ref A demarche, we followed up on February 20 with MFA Deputy Director for East and South Europe and the Balkans, Ahmed Hamdy Bakr. Elaborating on Aboul Gheit's points, Bakr noted that Egypt feared that regional separatist groups are latching on to Kosovar independence as a model for their own movements, and that international recognition of Kosovo could further destabilize the Balkans and inspire secession movements in countries as far away as Spain. We reiterated that widespread violence is unlikely given that Serbia specifically rejected violence as an option, although small violent incidents may occur, and that we do not see Kosovo as a precedent for other secession movements. We noted that every other option to move forward on Kosovo has been exhausted, and that strong international support for Kosovo would help, rather than hinder, regional stability.

13. (SBU) Asked about Egypt's support for Kosovo as a fellow Islamic-majority nation, Bakr said that Egypt does not see the Kosovo issue as a Muslim one, but rather as the continuation of an ethnic conflict.

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